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GERMANY



HITLER

or

LENIN



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have the words of the "Communist Manifesto," to the effect that in the war against Communism the capitalists are the most consistent collectivists, been so clearly justifiable as now. "We are not only defending Germany," says Goehring in his proclamation. To which must be replied: we know all about that. "*My pen is full of enthusiasm . . .* I cannot feel otherwise, for no one else in my generation, who saw the slaughter of the Russian revolution, can write differently . . ." Thus writes a Polish landlord, Matskevich, in the Vilna "Slovo," undoubtedly expressing the thoughts and expectations of the whole of the bourgeoisie. Hitler is attending to the *internal* affairs of the bourgeoisie of every capitalist country in Europe, but at the same time his advent to power has most forcefully sharpened the contradictions of the European imperialists; now the question of *war* is on the agenda for all capitalist Europe.

The question of *defending the German Communist Party* is now the business of the *whole of international Communism*. The question of defending the German working class is now the *vital problem* of the entire international proletarian revolution. Whereas the working class of old Russia set up the first country of proletarian dictatorship, and the mighty historic mission of the proletariat of the U.S.S.R. to-day is to build Socialism in one, single country, the German worker to-day is confronted with another mighty historic task—to demolish fascist dictatorship in Germany, which would mean the victory of the proletarian revolution throughout Central Europe. The task of the victorious proletarian dictatorship in Germany will be infinitely more simple, for the

proletarians of Soviet Germany will build Socialism in league with the U.S.S.R. The victory or defeat of the German proletariat is of first-class importance to the whole of capitalist Europe. Every Communist should realise this now.

What is the alignment of class forces in Germany?

The March 5 elections to the German Reichstag made it quite obvious that the German working class is hostile to fascist dictatorship, and that it was able to offer resistance to fascism at the elections in spite of terror hitherto unprecedented in the history of Germany, in spite of the fact that it is still divided, and a considerable section of the organised proletariat still follow social-democracy and are linked up with democratic illusions; that among masses of millions of proletarians, even *to-day* the determination to enter the last fight to the death against fascist dictatorship is not yet matured. But the elections to the German Reichstag revealed still more. The National-Socialists, cast up on a mighty wave of nationalism, by means of ferocious terror, licentious, chauvinistic propaganda, terrifying the petty-bourgeois philistines with stories of the "horrors" of proletarian revolution, and engaging in social-demagogy, chiefly in the villages—were able to get 17,265,000 votes. Together with Hugenberg's party—the chief party of German monopolist capital and the chief driving force of the offensive against the standard of living of the toilers, the National-Socialists have now an absolute majority. It is no secret that the fascist bands, more particularly in the far distant corners of the provinces of Germany, did not hesitate to wangle the count. In certain

parts the National-Socialists contrived to obtain 130 per cent. of the votes! But the fact that the National-Socialists have increased their vote, primarily in the agricultural districts of Germany, still remains true. The greatest increase in the number of votes to the National-Socialists came from Bavaria and Eastern Prussia. The national-socialists, by terror and deception, were able to a considerable extent, to isolate the German proletariat from the petty-bourgeoisie of town and village. The ferocious violence of the Hitler bands against the German proletariat would have been impossible, had the petty-bourgeois masses not blessed them with their agreement and "amens."

From its first advent to power, the Hitler government took the line of using *the village against the proletarian town*. Having come to power the national-socialists rapidly changed their anti-capitalist "poetry" for arch-bourgeois and junker prose. Was it so long ago that the national-socialists promised to abolish unemployment, to confiscate the land of the landowners, and to nationalise the trusts? This was all part of their programme in 1920 and after. Only three months have passed since the day when the leftest Nazi demagogue Göbbels declared in the "Sportpalast" that within twenty-four hours of the advent to power of the national-socialists the rapacious, anti-labour decrees introduced by von Papen would be repealed. To ensure the success of the election, Hitler is now only able to grant concessions in the form of the distribution of a morsel of bread and fat, and an increase of two marks a month in the unemployment benefits; these concessions will be lost in the near future

as a result of the increased cost of living in consequence of inflation. Hitler now calls upon the workers to give him from four to thirty years. Just like the "iron Chancellor" Bismarck (whose heir he imagines himself to be), he has "let down his trousers and revealed to the crowd the hind-quarters of his right to work." (Engels to Bebel in 1881.)

During Hitler's month in power the army of unemployed has not only not diminished, but has increased by fifty thousand. Dr. Bangke, the new Secretary of State in the Hugenberg ministry of "economic dictatorship," at a special convention of nationalist factory owners (the Hugenberg party) specially emphasised the fact that the new government "has not the slightest intention of engaging in social and political experiments." The national-socialists fulfil their consistent rôle of *landsknechten** of German monopolist capital. The radical difference in the situation when Hitler's fascist dictatorship came to power in Germany, and Italian fascism took over in 1922, when capitalism was proceeding towards relative stabilisation, was sufficient from the very first days to reveal the deception of national-socialist social-demagogy to vast masses of the proletariat. But, to arm the village against the proletarian town, and first and foremost in the interests of the Prussian junkers and the village kulaks, the Hitler-Hugenberg united fascist dictatorship issued a decree for a moratorium on rural debts until October, 1933. This moratorium was a special election manoeuvre. The raising of customs duties upon all imported agricultural pro-

* Serfs.

duce was another election manoeuvre in the direct interests of the Prussian junkers. In some cases customs duties were increased four to five times.

These measures, introduced exclusively in the interests of large-scale agrarian capital and the kulaks, on the one hand, increase the contradictions between industrial and agrarian capital, and the struggle of the capitalists for a share in plundering the German toiling masses still more, and, on the other, nevertheless, created a favourable atmosphere, before the elections to the Reichstag, for socially deceiving the toiling masses of the German village by means of Hitler's demagogy. This is the more so, since the Communist Party of Germany, of late, has considerably lessened its attention to the task of politically winning the urban and rural petty-bourgeoisie and bringing them over to its side. The March 5th elections showed that considerable sections of the middle and small peasantry fell victims to the nationalist social-demagogy of the national-socialists.

The Hitler government, which is a government of the most highly developed fascist dictatorship in Germany—whose open advent to power was realised under Papen by the July 20th coup d'état—is not able to solve a single one of the contradictions of German capitalism. On the contrary, all the main contradictions of German capitalism which Hitler inherited from the previous fascist dictatorship governments of Papen and Schleicher: the extremely intense class struggle, the competitive struggle among various groups of German capital, the tariff war against foreign capitalist States, the fight against the federalist governments of the separate German States

(Bavaria, Wurttemberg, Saxony), and finally Germany's gradual isolation on the arena of foreign politics—all these contradictions *have met with further intensification to an extent hitherto unprecedented*. The period to come will doubtless be a period during which the struggle inside the Hitler-Hugenberg bloc itself will be widely developed, as already proved by the fight around the question of the policy of inflation, around the appointment of Schacht to the position of President of the Reichsbank, and the struggle for posts in the Reichswehr among the national-socialists and the "Steel Helmet."

Already on the eve of the burning of the Reichstag, participants at the conference of leaders of the Steel Helmet in Berlin openly complained of the "lack of discipline" on the part of the storm troops who had been "given the wildest promises"; and talked about Gœrhring and Frick as not "being big enough" for the State posts occupied by them. Simultaneously at the conference of leaders of the storm troops the opinion was voiced almost as openly that allies on the Harzburg front must be got rid of in the government.

German monopolist capital, seeking to hasten on the capitalist way out of the crisis, put Hitler's fascist dictatorship of national-socialists in power in the place of Schleicher the "social general," who was unable to create an atmosphere of internal political confidence. But already one month's sojourn in power on the part of Hitler's government shows that you cannot feed the unemployed millions on soldiers' marches, that the unrestrained growth of the economic crisis in Germany cannot be stopped by Hitler's and Göbbels'

"teutonic" eloquence. In not more than two weeks, from February 10th to 24th, the rate of exchange of all German bills on the New York Exchange has dropped by almost 10 per cent.* At the same time, despite a certain tendency for the world situation to improve in certain branches of industry in the autumn of 1932, which evoked joyful "prognoses" from bourgeois economists and their social-fascist chorus at the time, about "the beginning of the end of the economic crisis in January and February, 1933," there has once more been a catastrophic drop in the output of German industry.

However much the German bourgeoisie may be serving the fascist dictator at the present time, the economic development, the contradictions of the economic crisis and the economic policy pursued by the fascist dictatorship are causing more and more upheavals. Time was when, during the discussion of the legislation against socialists in the German Reichstag, one liberal representative of the German bourgeoisie at least was found, a certain Bart, who hurled the contemptuous sobriquet at Chancellor Bismarck: "Comedian!" Another such representative of bourgeois democracy was not to be found, of course, in Germany to-day. He was not to be found in the ranks of German social democracy, either. Yet all the increasing contradictions of German capitalism protrude from the cracks in the Hitler-Hugenberg fascist dictatorship. The greatest representatives of monopolist capital are raising their voices more and more against the "one-sided" economic policy of the government, which is killing the

* These have since shown a further decline.—Ed.

export of German industry. During the middle of February, even, the Presidium of the German League of Industrialists, with Krupp as president, had to declare that "in its attitude to the new government, moreover, the position of industry will depend upon its economic and political measures." Karl Friedrich von Siemens, the leader of the big Siemens concern, was especially emphatic on this point at the annual conference of the concern.

"To all the difficulties which existed before," said he, "there has been added yet another tendency to consolidate the economic position of only one class, which is leading to a contraction of the trade between German and other countries."

As a result, the economic leader of fascist Germany, Hugenberg, who threw back the junker cliché that only two per cent. of the population are affected by the export industries of Germany, was compelled, nevertheless, through his Secretary of State, Dr. Bangke, to declare:

"There must be no experimenting with economy . . . the government should subject itself neither to creditors nor to debtors . . . the demand for subsidies, primarily as regards competitors, should be turned down . . ."

Simultaneously the contradictions between the central government and *individual States*, which are protesting against the attempt to institute a system of commissars on the part of the Hitler-Hugenberg central government, have increased. And the crushing of the Bavarian national party and the federalist opposition in several other countries after March 5th did not, of course, destroy these contradictions, but only drove them deeper in.

From the point of view of foreign politics, the process of German isolation has increased gigantically, thanks to the very fact of the advent of the national-socialists to power. The formation of an "organised pact" on the part of the Little Entente was French imperialism's first reply to the advent of Hitler to power, and the rumours of a triple alliance between Germany, Italy and Hungary, which were spread immediately after the formation of the Hugenberg government. On February 12th the Paris correspondent of the "Frankfurter Zeitung" wrote that "the tensivity in connection with the foreign political situation of Germany during the last few days has grown at a terrifying rate." Germany found herself absolutely isolated at the Disarmament Conference. The interview between Hitler and the English correspondent of the "Sunday Express" caused considerable excitement. For the first time Hitler raised the question of revising the Versailles system, and had to immediately deny the interview.

The attempt to bring pressure to bear upon Austria is still, for the time being, unsuccessful. In connection with the threat of French imperialism, after the Hirtenberg incident, to close credits in Austria, Hitler, who wanted to create a uniform régime throughout German Central Europe, made an attempt to get the Austrian national-socialists into the government by promising them financial support to capitalist Austria, in the throes of the heavy economic crisis, in return. Hitler summoned Gadich, the leader of the Austrian national-socialists, to Berlin and through him, made an offer of 75 million marks to the Austrian government on condition that the national-socialists are

brought into the government and new elections to parliament held (hoping, apparently, for a big increase in national-socialist votes). Hitler did not come to an agreement with the Austrian leading ultra-reactionary christian-socialist party; and the other fascist anti-Hitler organisation, the Heimwehr (which share the opposition with the Bavarian national party) replied to Hitler's counter-revolutionary advance in Germany with their own counter-revolutionary offensive in Austria. This was prevented by the international situation in Austria. Hitler helped to isolate Germany by his demagogic, provocative attacks against the U.S.S.R.

Finally, before the burning of the Reichstag, the signal for the most licentious reign of terror, Hitler had been unable, even with the terror that grew day by day to prevent workers' demonstrations and the growing resistance of the masses. Whereas the C.P.G., before the burning of the Reichstag and the open use of all the armed forces of bourgeois Germany against the revolutionary vanguard of the proletariat, had been unable to form *all-inclusive* unity among the German proletariat, now the successes of the united front under the leadership of the C.P.G. began to grow daily. This is proved by all the demonstrations and the general strikes in Lubeck, Stassfurt and Harzburg and 300 political strikes which took place during this month in Germany under the leadership of the C.P.G. We have proof of this in the first results of the elections to factory committees before February 27th. In 16 of the largest undertakings, where social-democracy previously had an overwhelming majority (83 per cent. of the total vote in 1929), only 44 per cent. voted for the

social-democratic list, and the Communists increased their vote to 33 per cent.

Thus the hopes of the fascist dictatorship of rapidly creating a "strong State and healthy economy" were confronted with the ever-increasing contradictions of German capitalism. It was just this that prompted the Hitler-Hugenberg government to force the "Fascist tiger," Captain Gœhring, to jump upon the German working class, through the Reichstag he had burned, and to kill two birds with one stone: to smash the working class and secure a majority in the Reichstag. This "jump" was *carefully weighed and prepared*. We have proof of this in the fact that the leaders of monopolist capital in Germany themselves in the famous bulletin "Deutsche Führerbriefe," intended for captains of industry, and captains of incendiarism and pogroms, on the very day of the burning of the Reichstag *published an exact forecast of the whole trend of further events, and gave away the whole programme of action of fascist dictatorship*. This is confirmed by the sensational revelations of preparations for the fire given in the "Populaire."

The elections brought an absolute majority to the Harzburg bloc. The centre has lost its key position. Owing to the "removal" of the Communist deputies, the national-socialists will themselves actually have a majority in the Potsdam parliament. But this does not in the least mitigate the further deepening of contradictions among the German bourgeoisie, but on the contrary rather augments it. Already two days after the elections to the Reichstag the organ of big capital, the "Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," agitatedly stated that "the bourgeois-national

group, including the black-white-and-red-front, have suffered a devastating defeat . . . and this fact, although unexpected, nevertheless *depicts the future in not particularly bright colours*." The same paper notes the further *isolation of Germany in foreign politics* and gives warning against those who issue the slogan: "We don't give a hang for anyone." This is obviously the question of the violent, offensive policy of the national-socialists at present; their heads have been turned by the 17 million votes, they are extending their front of struggle more and more. Having deceived broad masses of the petty-bourgeoisie, the national-socialists, who *have nothing with which to redeem the bills they have issued*, have to cast round for new effective "victories." This, they hoped, would deaden the hunger of the toiling masses, and the growing contradictions of the German bourgeoisie. The weapon they use in this connection is torture, shootings, murder of Communist workers, social-democrats and non-party workers. The weapon they use is the war hazard, open propaganda of war, reckless adventurism as regards foreign policy, all the insolent, anti-Soviet antics of fascist brutality. This is also an explanation for the intense rapidity with which commissars were appointed to certain districts, the crushing of the Bavarian government, and appointing the fascist general von Epp as Hitler's right-hand man in Bavaria. The national-socialists are beginning arrests and shootings even against individual leaders of social-democracy and the trade union bureaucracy, in order to get full control of social-democracy and make the trade unions fascist, on the Italian pattern.

Thus German fascism can offer to the German

toilers no other prospect but that of *war, rabid capitalist exploitation and deprivation of all political rights*. At present the *initiative* is taken by the fascist dictatorship of united bourgeois reaction and the national-socialist party, which, for a period, has been able to bring over huge masses of the petty-bourgeoisie to its side. *The nationalist fervour* of the petty-bourgeoisie, and especially of the youth, *has been trained* already by all the foregoing education of *social-democracy*. Was it not Ebert, the first President of the November Republic, who met the soldiers returning from the front with chauvinistic, revengeful slogans like: "You are not returning home defeated!" Was it not social-democracy, when in power in the November Republic, which educated and pushed forward the creator of the Reichswehr and unsuccessful candidate among German Napoleons, General von Seckt, who advanced the "social general" Schleicher, and many other fascist generals and police-presidents, who are now, filled with the fear of God, shooting certain of the leaders of German social-democracy, together with Communist and social-democratic workers?

But however great the initiative of fascist counter-revolution, it cannot destroy the *deep hatred* of the working class for fascism, and its *eagerness for a united front of revolutionary struggle*; it cannot bridge the *mighty gulf* that has formed itself in German capitalism; it cannot avoid the *counter-initiative* of the Communist vanguard or the counter-offensive of the working class, led by the Communist Party. It cannot overcome the deep source, in general, of the inevitable crisis of fascist dictatorship. And this

source is the poverty and indignation of the masses, which is now past all bounds.

And hence, moreover, the intense desire for *unity* on the part of the working masses. The task of devastating this frenzied fascist dictatorship makes it essential for every German worker to realise at all costs the *united front* of proletarian class struggle, and to tear millions of urban and rural petty bourgeois toiling masses *away from* national socialism. But it will be possible to tear the petty bourgeoisie away from fascism only when it is convinced of the deception of fascist social-demagogy, when it believes in the strength of the working class, and the capability of the Communist vanguard to lead a victorious struggle for proletarian dictatorship.

In order to hasten on the process of isolating national-socialism from the deceived petty-bourgeois masses, and thus lessen the misery of the working class at the hands of fascist hangmen, it is primarily essential that there should be *militant unity among the working class itself*. Up to now social-democracy has stood in the way of this unity, and step by step, through its tactic of the "lesser evil," its betrayal on July 20th, its sabotage of the general strike on January 30th, has disrupted the working class struggle, and gradually brought it under the present blows of bloody, fascist terror. As a mass organisation German social-democracy is between two mill-stones — Communism and social-nationalism — and its leaders, on the one hand, utter "left" slogans in favour of the united front to blackmail the bourgeoisie and trick the workers, and, on the other, have been, and are still, crawling on their bellies to fascist dictatorship, if only it will leave

social-democracy just a little of the mass basis, and the chance to "hold things over." On January 30th social-democracy assured the workers that "it is too early to fight," that they "should prepare," that Hitler was still ruling on the basis of the constitution, that they should wait and see whether he would really violate the constitution, and that "at present there is no reason for a general strike." This was the essence of the speech of Urich, the Berlin trade union bureaucrat, delivered on January 30th, in the evening, at a conference of social-democratic functionaries. This was the essence of the speech, at the same time, of the one-time independent Breitscheid, who, six weeks previously, in connection with the dock-tailed amnesty declared by Schleicher, at a social-democratic meeting in Weissensee, stated:

"We support the amnesty in order to destroy the cruel sentences of the Papen emergency courts. We are against amnesty in general, because it can be used in favour of political criminals" . . .

On March 1st the social-democrat leaders were already assuring the workers that "now everything was finished," "now we can do nothing," now we must wait until fascism dies out of itself. On March 1st these "leaders" were on their knees before the Fascist dictators, imploring them for mercy and the honourable rôle of "opposition to His Fascist Majesty" in the imperial stables of Potsdam. Social-democracy is chiefly to blame for the fact that a mass political strike on January 30th was not possible on a broad scale. It is chiefly to blame for the fact that the German proletariat was systematically disarmed by social

democracy, and temporarily relaxed its initiative. But the German proletariat will renew this initiative, under the leadership of the Communist Party. And by disarming the working masses, social-democracy prepared its own end. Social-democracy, as a mass party of millions, will inevitably be smashed. Many of the Wesels and Leiparts are already now preparing for a jump from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom . . . "of the third empire." Nothing is left of social-democracy — except what fascist dictatorship allows it.

* * *

It is for this reason that it is of imperative importance that the Communist Party of Germany make it clear to *every* social-democratic worker, to *every* member of the reformist trade unions, as to *who* is fighting against fascism, as to *who* is forming and capable of forming the united front of the German working class. When on January 25th, in reply to the provocative demonstration of fascists outside Liebknecht House, one hundred thousand workers answered the call of the Communist Party and came out on to the streets, Stampfer, the editor of "Vorwaerts," overcome by the rousing spectacle of the demonstration, and the impotence of social-democracy, became convinced of the growing might of the united front movement; he uttered winged words: "You, Communists, are wrong when you say that we are betraying the workers; our language is, indeed, the language of the workers." The truth really is that the leaders of social democracy catch hold of and *stimulate* the mood of the more backward, conservative strata of the working class, so as to infect the whole working class and sabotage the

revolutionary, proletarian class struggle. It is the task of the Communists to deprive the Stampers of their stings. There is no country in the world where the Communist International manifesto* on the united front for joint class action is of such effect, is so devastating, as it is for the leaders of social-democracy in Germany. Before the Communist Party of Germany to-day is an exceptional opportunity indeed of winning the majority of the working class. The Communist International manifesto deprives the social-democratic leaders of their last chance of speculating on demagogic slogans about "non-aggression pacts," and the "disrupting" tactics of the Communists.

The leaders of German social-democracy, of course, are not thinking at present of any militant united front against fascism, have no intention of any front against fascist dictatorship at all. The united front slogan—for them—has always been merely a means of disrupting and sabotaging the real revolutionary struggle against fascism. They know full well that the realisation of a militant united front among the proletariat would mean suicide for them.

Consequently the primary task of the German Communists now is to realise the united front of the proletarian everywhere possible. For it is a question of winning over the social-democratic workers for a fight against national-socialism and against social-democracy, which capitulates to the former.

The national-socialists have been unable to penetrate into the workshops and factories on a

wide scale. But the elections showed that they had been able to bring along in their train a certain section of the unemployed, partly by offering them petty social concessions and deceptive promises of work, even of the hardest form of labour. It would be harmful self-deception not to perceive the successes of the national-socialists in several industrial districts among the backward strata of the proletariat, especially in certain of the textile districts of Saxony. Engels, as far back as 1881, wrote as follows:—

" . . . They are not a real nucleus for a big national movement. Their poverty — as in 1865-70 — makes them, in certain conditions, easily susceptible to socialist propaganda, more so than the workers in big towns. But it is this very poverty that also makes them more inconstant. A drowning man catches at a straw, and cannot wait until the boat is launched from the shore to bring him help. The boat is the socialist revolution, the straw is protective tariffs and State socialism." (Letter from Engels to Bernstein, November, 1881.)

These words of Engels are of vital significance nowadays, since they reveal the danger of the fascist social poison of to-day. Fascism has been unable to penetrate into the depths of the working class, especially of its vanguard—the metal-workers; and never will. But it would be extremely feckless, a crime to the cause of the working class, to leave events to themselves, on the grounds that the working class is immune from fascist propaganda. The drowning Saxon textile worker will only stop grasping at a "straw" when he is sure that the "boat" is coming towards him,

* See No. 3-4 "C.I."

steered by a determined, experienced pilot, and that it is able to save him.

At the same time the German Communist Party must *considerably* increase its fight to *tear the petty bourgeoisie away from national-socialism*. In reply to the moratorium of the Hitler Government, the Communist Party should issue a militant slogan to the rural toilers calling for the abolition of moratoriums for junkers and kulaks, abolition of all subsidies to agrarian capital ("Osthilfe," etc.), annulment of all debts accumulated by the rural toilers, abolition of duties on industrial goods. The fight is not to support bankrupt, large, agrarian capital, but to confiscate their land and transfer it unconditionally to the landless peasants, to those with very little land, and to the agricultural workers.

On the other hand, the Communist Party of Germany, in revealing the charlatan character of national-socialist demagoguery about the "fight against speculative capital" to the petty-bourgeois masses in the towns, will have an increasing opportunity day by day of showing the town petty-bourgeoisie that Hitler has not removed the factors that are continually declassing and pauperising them, but that it is merely a question of a few hundred thousand posts for Hitler's most active supporters who are eager after a little of the State pie, and that the petty-bourgeoisie are merely so much cannon fodder, the victims of war psychology, of chauvinistic rage, inspired by the fascists, and that it is only the common struggle with the proletariat, led by the proletariat, that can save it from poverty, from physical and moral degeneration.

* * *

The task of primary importance before the Communist vanguard now is propaganda of *internationalism* against the new war psychology, and against the new wave of *chauvinism and reprisals* which the national-socialists have now brought to a climax. The XII. Plenum of the E.C.C.I. formulated this task, but now, with the advent of Hitler to power and the more and more openly manifest adventurism of the fascist dictatorship in the field of foreign politics, there must be certain changes in the Communist method of struggle against the Versailles system, not only in Germany, but also in other capitalist countries. While continuing the consistent fight for Germany's national emancipation, against the Versailles slavery, the Communists should make the centre of their propaganda the work of daily revealing the fact before the masses that the Hitler government is a *war* government, which will bring inconceivable suffering to the German people and that the national-socialists are the "landsknechten" not only of German monopolist capital, but of the whole of international bourgeois counter-revolution against the land of proletarian dictatorship.

On the other hand, French imperialism, like its agents from the Second International, is now striving to raise the prestige of bourgeois France as "the bulwark of democracy against fascism," and to create the necessary prerequisite for a "sacred unity of nations" inside France. The Communist Party's task in such cases, while mobilising the masses against Hitler fascism, is to concentrate their attack upon the nationalist propaganda of their own bourgeoisie at home, and to unmask the counter-revolutionary character and aims of its "pacifist" slogans.

To win over the broad masses of social-democratic, christian and non-party workers, together with the town and village petty-bourgeois masses, the Communist Party of Germany must show them the clear aim of its revolutionary struggle. Weimar Germany is bankrupt. It is now ancient history. All the social-democratic legends about the "democratic" road to socialism can be very quickly dispersed with it if active work is done. In Germany only two real forces are fighting for power: *Communism and Fascism*. The question of power, the question of *proletarian dictatorship*, the question as to *what proletarian dictatorship in Germany would do*, as compared with what the national-socialists have done, during their first month in power, should occupy the first place. "*Down with Hitler's Fascist Government*" should be the main, mobilising, political slogan of the German Communist Party at the present stage of struggle.

The historical period during which the decisive struggle has to be waged for proletarian dictatorship or bourgeois dictatorship is very short in Germany. The German working class lost the initiative for a period. But its revolutionary hatred of the capitalist exploiters, of the fascist violators, has grown threefold, the thirst for militant unity has grown tenfold. The tasks of the German working class and its Communist vanguard are now more complicated, more grave; but they are capable of realisation. This demands more determination and more active work on the part of the German Communist Party (which already has born heavy sacrifices in the fight against fascism, and whose leader, Comrade Thälmann, is languishing in a fascist gaol, but

which has been able to keep its entire party apparatus intact)—in continuing with unabated energy and enthusiasm to lead the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat. The more determinedly and rapidly must the Communist Party *rearrange its forces* to suit the new conditions.

Defence of working class political rights, social insurance, and all that has been accumulated as a result of years of stubborn class struggle, defence of the workers' elementary rights, defence of workers' lives and property, the struggle against the fascists' smashing up the trade unions and their seizure of the trade unions — all this will rapidly mobilise the workers and bring about proletarian unity. By taking these immediate tasks as our starting point, by mobilising the masses against fascism and the capitalist offensive, we can lead the working class to a mass, general, political strike, to the violent overthrow of bourgeois rule.

This does not exclude criticism of the policy of the social-democratic and reformist trade union leaders, but, on the contrary, presupposes increased criticism. In this period of grave trial for the German proletariat, the working class masses must feel every day that the Communist Party *is with them, is leading them*, that it stands *at its post*. *Here lies the chief guarantee of success.* For this very reason the German Communist Party should determinedly and mercilessly fight to overcome all defeatist tendencies, all tendencies to "let things take their course" as regards fascism, which are to be found not only among the social-democratic workers, but also among certain groups in the Communist Party itself, and are the direct results of social-demo-

cratic influences. It was just these disintegrating, defeatist, social-democratic slogans and their effect upon certain groups in the German Communist Party, like the parliamentary and constitutional illusions of social-democracy, which were the main reasons for the unsuccessful conversion of separate cases of strikes into a mass, general strike movement throughout Germany after January 30 this year.

The German Communist Party is working in circumstances of such brutal terror for the first time. Fascist dictatorship has forced the German Communist Party underground, hoping in this way to isolate it from the masses.

This makes it essential for the Communists to adopt certain *new forms of work* and to use several new *forms of mobilising the masses*. Often these new forms are put forward from among the working masses themselves. This was the case after January 30, when throughout Germany a wave of small, yet *mass* demonstrations broke out. The German Communist Party must *head all forms of mass resistance* to fascism. The most important thing is that it should be a *mass* movement. The Communist Party must not allow the struggle to be *disunited*, must not give the enemy a chance to break up the revolutionary proletarian vanguard *into sections*.

This further requires that the Communist vanguard rapidly and seriously reinforce its *illegal* organisations, rapidly and seriously develop a broad network of *illegal party newspapers*. But at the same time it requires simultaneously from the Communist vanguard its maximum penetration into all *legal* mass organisations, a *skilful combination* of legal and illegal work, which is

especially important at the present stage of revolutionary struggle of the German proletariat. This means, first of all, that maximum attention should be paid to work in the trade unions, because:

"It (the trade union organisation) is the true class organisation of the proletariat, in which it carries on its daily struggle against capitalism, and which is at the same time its school, which even the blackest reaction cannot smother now." (Letter from Engels to Bebel, 1875.)

German fascism, while trying to smash the trade unions, and contracting their present mass basis, is at the same time striving to get into the trade unions and get control of them. On the other hand, the change in the reformist trade union bureaucracy towards fascism will consist just in this (*and the process has already begun*), that under the flag of "neutrality" and "lack of interest in politics" it will hand over the trade unions to the fascist beheaders. The revolutionary trade union opposition should, therefore, concentrate all its attention upon work in the trade unions and defending the trade unions from the penetration of fascists.

Only by these means, only by mobilising every resistance of the mass—in the first case at the factories—can the German Communist Party realise its own slogan of a *mass political strike and preparation for a general strike* against fascist dictatorship, and make this slogan the property of millions and millions of German proletarians *in the daily realisation of the militant united front*.

The German working class is faced with the greatest danger. But inherent in the German

working class are inexhaustible revolutionary forces. The mighty historic mission which has fallen to the lot of the German Communists to-day, the vanguard of revolutionary Marxism-Leninism in the capitalist world, is to raise these revolutionary forces to the surface, and hurl them like a devastating avalanche upon the united forces of bourgeois reaction, frenzied at the presentiment of their rapidly approaching doom.

EXTRACT FROM THE RESOLUTION OF
PRESIDIUM OF COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL
ON SITUATION IN GERMANY, APRIL 1ST.
(From "Daily Worker," 10/4/33).

In the conditions of the tremendous sharpening of the economic and political situation in Germany, when, on the one hand, the Communist Party had already become a tremendous force in the working-class, and a revolutionary crisis was rapidly maturing, when, on the other hand, the deep contradictions among the ruling classes themselves had become clear and the Fascist dictatorship in the shape of the von Papen and Schleicher Government was not in a position to stop the growth of Communism and find any way out of the ever-intensifying economic crisis, the German bourgeoisie delegated the establishment of an open Fascist dictatorship to the Fascist Hitler and his "National Socialist" Party.

The victory of Hitler and the establishment of the power of the "National Socialists" was possible owing to the following circumstances.

German Social-Democracy, which had the support of the majority of the proletariat in the November Revolution of 1918, split the working-class.

Instead of carrying the revolution forward to the dictatorship of the proletariat and Socialism, which was the duty of a workers' party, it, in alliance with the bourgeoisie and the generals of the Kaiser, suppressed the uprising of the revolutionary masses and laid the basis for a profound split in the working-class of Germany

In the conditions of imperialism and still more so in a country which had been defeated in the imperialist war

and whose capitalism had been deeply undermined by the general crisis of the capitalist system, the Weimar "democratic" bourgeois republic could only be a reactionary dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

Continual and gradual concessions to reaction, a gradual repeal of one point of the constitution after another, of one gain of the workers after another, the gradual Fascisation of the whole apparatus of the State, so greatly discredited the Weimar coalition and the Weimar republic that it lost all serious significance in the eyes of the broad masses.

It can be understood, therefore, that at a time of the most intense economic crisis, which increased the burden of the external Versailles national oppression, and when, due to the Social-Democrats, the working-class was split and consequently not strong enough to carry the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the peasant masses with it—there was bound to arise, and actually there did arise, a tempestuous outburst of German nationalism and Chauvinism which considerably strengthened the political situation of the bourgeoisie and brought to the surface the most demagogic nationalist party—the party of the "National Socialists."

The Communist workers organised and carried on a struggle against the capitalist and Fascist offensive.

They supported even the slightest action of the Social-Democratic workers against capital, wherever such actions took place.

In pursuing its line of struggle for the revolutionary unity of the working-class against the Social-Democratic united front with the bourgeoisie, the Communist Party, as the only revolutionary leader of the German proletariat, in spite of the strike-breaking tactics of Social-Democracy, called on the working-class for a general political strike on July 20, 1932, when the Fascists dispersed the Social-Democratic Prussian Government, and on January 30, 1933, when Hitler came into power in Germany.

In order to carry on this strike, the Communist Party proposed a united front to the Social-Democratic Party and the reformist trade unions.

The development of the struggle of the working-class against the bourgeoisie and Fascism, and a general strike, would have caused the hesitating toiling masses of peasants and the urban petty-bourgeoisie to follow the proletariat.

But the Social-Democrats, continuing their previous policy, and directing themselves to further collaboration with the bourgeoisie, fettered the initiative of the masses through the network of centralised organisations which followed their lead—first of all the reformist trade unions. . . .

The bourgeoisie was able, without serious resistance, to hand over the Governmental power in the country to the National Socialists, who acted against the working-class by the methods of provocation, bloody terror and political banditry.

In analysing the conditions for a victorious uprising of the working-class, Lenin said that a decisive battle can be considered as fully mature—

IF "all the class forces which are hostile to us have become SUFFICIENTLY entangled, have SUFFICIENTLY come into conflict with each other, have SUFFICIENTLY weakened themselves by a struggle which is beyond their strength";

IF "all the vacillating, hesitating, unstable, intermediate elements, i.e., the petty-bourgeoisie, petty-bourgeois democracy as distinguished from the bourgeoisie, have SUFFICIENTLY exposed themselves to the people, have SUFFICIENTLY disgraced themselves by their practical bankruptcy";

IF "among the working-class mass sentiment has begun, and is rising strongly, in favour of supporting the most decisive, supremely bold and revolutionary activity against the bourgeoisie;

"Then the revolution has matured, and if we have properly taken into account all the conditions mentioned above . . . and have properly selected the moment, our victory is assured."

The characteristic feature of the circumstances at the time of the Hitler coup was that these conditions for a victorious rising had not yet managed to mature at that moment. They only existed in an embryonic state.

As for the vanguard of the working-class—the Communist Party—it did not wish to slip into rash adventures, and of course could not compensate for the missing factors by its own actions.

"It is impossible to win with the vanguard alone," says Lenin. "To throw the vanguard alone into the decisive fight while the whole of the class, the whole

of the broad masses, have not occupied the position either of direct support of the vanguard or at least of friendly neutrality towards it . . . would not only be foolish, but a crime."

Such were the circumstances which decided the retreat of the working-class and the victory of the party of the counter-revolutionary Fascists in Germany. . . .

The continuation of the moratorium until October and the introduction of quotas on imports of agricultural products, can only satisfy a small section of the most well-to-do peasants for a very short period, but cannot stop the growth of want, poverty and discontent among the broad peasant masses.

The demagogic attacks on the big stores and Jewish capital cannot help the impoverished petty-bourgeoisie, whose position will grow proportionately worse with the further fall of the purchasing power of the home market . . .

It is becoming clear that Hitler is leading Germany to economic catastrophe, which is becoming more and more inevitable.

The National Socialist movement grew up first of all as a nationalist and Chauvinist movement of the petty-bourgeoisie and part of the peasant masses, led by officers and Government officials from the Kaiser's days against the Versailles Treaty.

The two months in which Hitler has been in power have been just one chauvinist tirade against proletarian internationalism and against "world Bolshevism." . . .

Every day will show with greater clearness that Hitler is leading Germany to CATASTROPHE.

The present period of calm after the victory of Fascism is temporary.

The revolutionary upsurge in Germany will inevitably grow in spite of the Fascist terror. The resistance of the masses to Fascism is bound to increase. The establishment of an open Fascist dictatorship, by destroying all the democratic illusions among the masses and liberating them from the influence of Social-Democracy, accelerates the rate of Germany's development towards proletarian revolution.

The task of the Communists must be to explain to the masses that the Hitler Government is leading the country to catastrophe.

It is now necessary to warn the masses with greater

energy than ever before that the only salvation for the toiling masses from still greater poverty and want, the only way to avoid catastrophe, is the proletarian revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat.

It is necessary to strive to rally all the forces of the working-class and form a united front of Social-Democratic and Communist workers for the struggle against the class enemies.

It is necessary to strengthen the Party and strengthen all the mass organisations of the working-class—to prepare the masses for decisive revolutionary battles. For the overthrow of capitalism and for the overthrow of the Fascist dictatorship by an armed rising.

In view of all this, the Presidium of the E.C.C.I. approves the programme of practical activities planned by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Germany.